

# The Creation Plan of God



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## THE CREATION PLAN OF GOD

The Famous historian, Edward Gibbon, observed: "Human History is little more than a register of the crimes, follies and misfortunes of mankind." Other historians have also arrived at similar conclusions, for the ideal existence envisioned by philosophers is nowhere reflected in human societies. Orientalists who have made an in-depth study of human history have remarked that, as regards the human failure to achieve the ideal society, Islamic history is no great exception.

Orientalists hold that, although the history of the first phase of Islam—known as the golden age—no doubt presents a better picture than that of other periods, it too fails to measure up to the ideal. During the life of the Prophet, owing to the antagonistic activities of the hypocrites internally and the Jews and idolaters externally, Madinah, the city of the Prophet, could never in any significant sense be converted into an area of peace. After the Prophet's demise, and shortly after the first Caliph, Abu Bakr, had been appointed to be the leader of the Muslims, most of the Arab tribes revolted. It



was only when force was used that they were prevailed upon to re-enter the Islamic fold.

Subsequently, in almost every period, unfavourable developments repeatedly proved to be hindrances to the formation of the ideal society. During the times of Umar, the second Caliph, a secret lobby in Madinah, working towards the extirpation of Islam, finally succeeded in having the Caliph assassinated. Afterwards the age of open opposition set in. The third Caliph, likewise, was publicly murdered. The reign of Ali, the fourth Caliph, was marked by civil war in which thousands of precious lives were lost and the Caliph himself was martyred.

Given the state of affairs, thinkers and philosophers have always expressed pessimistic views about human history, holding it to be an ongoing tragedy: events have shown that, in this world, the building of the ideal human society is well-nigh impossible.

The reason for this pessimistic view of history does not lie in history itself, but in our flawed approach to the subject. Our criterion to study history is not the correct one, for it has been formulated by human beings. The only valid criterion, in the light

of which we should study human history, is that laid down by our Creator. The right way to understand this matter is, therefore, to discover the creation plan of the creator and then attempt to study history within its framework.

From a study of the Qur'an, we learn that for a proper understanding of human society the central idea is not ideal society, but it is human freedom. Man has been granted full freedom of speech and action in this life the reason being that he has been placed in this world by the Almighty for the purpose of being tested. As a prerequisite for this test, man is at liberty to deny God, to kill prophets and to oppose the *da'is* (messengers) of truth. Given such a state of affairs, human freedom would have to be withdrawn altogether in order to bring an ideal society into existence. And God, in accordance with His plan of creation, would never under any circumstances abrogate human freedom. The particular nature of human existence on earth has been thus explained in the Qur'an:

We offered Our trust to the heavens, to the earth and to the mountains, but they refused



to accept the burden. Man undertook to bear it, but he has proved foolish and unjust. God will surely punish the hypocrites, men and women, and the unbelievers, both men and women; but God pardons believing men and believing women. God is Forgiving and Merciful (33:72-73).

'Trust' in the above verses refers to the freedom of choice with which man has been entrusted. The earth and the heavens have neither such freedom nor any will-power of their own. They are compelled to adhere to the laws of nature laid down by God for all eternity. But man has no such compulsion. He is totally free in word and deed.

From other verses in the Qur'an, we learn that, according to the Creation plan of God, what is of actual importance in this world is the building not of an ideal society but of ideal individuals (67:2). The ideal human society will, therefore, come into existence not in this world, but in the world Hereafter — referred to in the Qur'an as *Darus Salam* (the Home of Peace). The actual obstacle to the building of the ideal society in this world is the



presence everywhere of rebellious and insolent people. In the heavenly society of the Hereafter, all such evil-doers will be separated from good people; the heavenly society will then be comprised only of virtuous souls. Only in heaven then will it be possible to create an ideal society.

The error in the thinking of secular philosophers derives from their desire to construct in this present world the ideal society — the society which, according to god's scheme of things, is going to become a reality only in the world of the Hereafter. The most formidable obstacle to the emergence of an ideal society is human freedom, but thanks to the exigencies of God's trial of humanity, human freedom is not going to be taken away. The ideal society will thus remain a distant dream.

According to the Qur'an, the truth has been fully set forth in this world. Now it is up to man to put his faith in it or to deny it (18:29). At another point the Qur'an says:

It rests with God to show the right path. Some turn aside from it, but had He pleased, He

would have given right guidance to you all (16:9).

The Qur'an further observes; Had your Lord pleased, He would have made mankind a single nation. But only those to whom He has shown mercy will cease to differ. To this end He has created them. The word of your Lord shall be fulfilled: 'I will fill Hell with jinn and men all together' (11:118,119).

This freedom granted to man by his Creator is the reason why a society with uniformity in all its aspects could never be produced in human history. If in a society there are virtuous people, there are wicked people as well. The unworthy have never ceased to create disturbance, even the societies founded by the prophets are no exception. That is why despite the existence of good individuals in this world, a good society could never become a possibility.

However, this is not a matter of evil, or even of deficiency. The truth is that the recurrence of disturbance and dissension in society is essential to the realization of the Creation Plan itself, for good



people of the highest calibre are produced in unfavourable rather than in favourable situations.

We learn from the Qur'an that man was born to an existence fraught with toil and strife (90:4). The Qur'an, addressing the human race, has this to say: 'Go hence, and may your descendants be enemies to each other' (7:24). In this world, man has no choice but to lead a life which is marred by trial and tribulation, opposition and enmity till the coming of Doomsday.

This human condition has not come about by accident. This is exactly in accordance with the divine scheme of things. God has created this world in order to select those individuals who are capable of inhabiting heaven. These worthy inhabitants of paradise are invariably produced under abnormal rather than normal circumstances. Human beings should therefore will continue to face unfavourable circumstances in order that desirable people will go on being produced for such a selection.

The Qur'an states: Do men think that once they say: 'We are believers,' they will be left alone and not be tried? We tested those who have gone before them.



God knows those who are truthful and those who are lying (29:1-3). In a similar vein the Qur'an says: Did you suppose that you would go to Paradise untouched by the suffering which was endured by those before you? Affliction and adversity befell them; and so battered were they that each apostle, and those who shared his faith, cried out: 'When will the help of God come?' His help is ever near (2:214).

There is another verse to this effect: Did you suppose that you would enter Paradise before God has known the men who fought hard and the steadfast? (3:142). Yet again the Qur'an addresses Muslims in these words: Did you imagine that you would be abandoned before God has had time to know those of you who have fought valiantly and served none but Him and His Apostle and the faithful? God is cognizant of all your actions (9.14).

The truth is that in this world what is desirable to God is not the Ideal Society but the Ideal man. And as we learn from the Qur'an, such an individual is produced in conditions of 'severe affliction,'



(Qur'an, 33:11) and not in normal, peaceful circumstances.

God looks with favour upon those human beings who, finding themselves in the midst of a jungle of theories and ideologies, are able to discern the truth and then to persevere in their adherence to it. He gives His approval to those human beings whose faith remains unshaken even in the face of severe problems and dire adversity; whose hearts, even when they are subjected to all manner of persecution, are untainted by negative sentiments; who when threatened with calamity, do not lose heart, but undergo such a process of brainstorming as will lead to their intellectual development; who even when faced with such untoward events as are likely to divert them from the Straight Path, remain staunch in their faith in God; who feel the great tumult of the awakening of spirituality in their hearts, bringing them closer to God.

The man most desirable to God is one worthy of inhabiting the refined and ideal world of Paradise. Such a person, the rarest of rare phenomena, is greater than all that is great in the Universe. Such a



human being takes a new birth. He is born, not in peaceful circumstances but in great strife and turmoil. He faces darkness in this world, so that he may live in the eternal light of the Hereafter. He treads a thorny path in this life, so that he may enjoy a flower-filled environment in the afterlife. Here he suffers loss, so that he may be blessed with the joys of recovery in the Hereafter. He patiently bears the deprivation of the pleasures and comforts of this world, so that he may be entitled to a place in the eternal Paradise of heavenly bliss.

Such a precious soul cannot come into being in a vacuum. Nor can he develop in the normal atmosphere of society—no matter how closely approaching the ideal that society may be. It is only in the jungle of adversity that such a soul can emerge; there is no other possible breeding ground.

What philosophers describe as social evil is a training ground devised by the Creator to produce human beings of great moral and spiritual character. That is why, in every period of human history, mankind has been faced with all manner of conflict and dissension. The true believers, the



virtuous and, in particular, the prophets, have invariably found themselves in unpropitious situations. There is a *hadith* to this effect: “When God loves a people, He puts them to the test.”

Unfavourable circumstances are not peculiar to non-Muslim societies; in one way or another, they have always been a part of Muslim societies too. In ancient times, the prophets were born among idolaters and deniers and were subjected to severe persecution by their contemporaries. We learn from the Qur'an that the Prophet Moses was likewise threatened with mental torture and physical agony, even although he had been sent to the People of the Book, that is, to the Jews. (33:69)

The Prophet Muhammad, may peace be upon him, established a properly organized state in Arabia, later known as the *Khilafat-e-Rashida*, and ruled successively by the four rightly guided Caliphs. But even during this ideal period of Islam, the state continued to suffer from a variety of severe problems. Indeed, there is no period of the Islamic State which can be pinpointed as one in which



Muslims led their lives in a state of perfect peace and normalcy.

This is not due to any deficiency in the Islamic State, but rather to the exigencies of the “training course” established by God Himself for the moral discipline of human beings. As mentioned above, it is not part of God’s plan that an ideal society should be formed in this world in which people will lead peaceful lives. According to God’s scheme of things, what is of actual importance is the preparation and formation of individuals. This unavoidably takes place in an atmosphere, not of peace and tranquility, but of turbulence and turmoil.

In the present world, neither at the national or communal level, do we possess the moral and physical resource which are essential to the construction of a high standard society. However, we do have the means to build the ideal character in individuals, and this is an ongoing reality— as a requirement of God’s Creation plan, which is concerned not with the building of a heavenly society, but the building of the heavenly individual who is fit to dwell in the ideal society of paradise.



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Looked at in terms of the ideal society, the history of Islam would appear to have its darker, negative side. But if seen in terms of the development of individuals, this same history would appear to have a very positive, bright side. The ideal society or the ideal state may not have come into being but, throughout Islamic history, there has never been any dearth of individuals of great moral and spiritual calibre. Indeed, the annals of history may have little to show in terms of ideal societies, but their pages have been made resplendent with the thoughts, words and deeds of ideal individuals.

## DISCOVERY OF ISLAM

Once a Muslim scholar from the UK visited India to give a lecture on: 'Islam and the West.' During the question hour, an Indian Muslim asked: 'You have given us so much information about Islam and the West, now, would you please tell us what the Muslims should do, when in the minority, in countries such as India?' The scholar remained silent for a while and then replied: "It is, indeed, a difficult question. In Islam we find a model for a position of strength. But, there is no model in Islam for the position of modesty." This is not just a stray remark. In fact, it illustrates the way of thinking prevalent almost all over the Muslim world today. It clearly shows the mindset of today's Muslims. Consciously or unconsciously, they look to their glorious history in order to understand their status and role in the world. Their mentality is such that when they find a prominent model of strength, they naturally conclude that what Islam stands for is worldwide Muslim political dominance. It is this attitude which prevents them from penetrating the veil of their glorious history to seek guidance directly from the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. Had they

done so, they would certainly, have succeeded in finding role models for all human positions including that of modesty. They would further have realized that it is not the political but the ideological spread of Islam through peaceful *da'wah* work that the Muslim *Ummah* has to struggle for everywhere and under all circumstances.

Contrary to the prevalent misconception that Islam failed to provide its followers with any model of a low-key position, an unbiased study of the Prophet's biography will reveal that up till the conquest of Makkah in the 8th A.H., 20 of the 23 years of his life as a Prophet, were spent in exactly what is nowadays termed a state of modesty. When, chronologically, more than three-quarters of the Prophetic mission portrays a picture of humility, what is it that makes one remark that there is no Islamic model for Muslim minorities in India or elsewhere? The fact is that such people are so overwhelmed by the political glory built up during the later period of Muslim history, that their eyes are totally blinded to the glory of the modesty in the life of the Prophet.

This shift in later history of drawing inspiration from political glory instead of from the Qur'an and Sunnah, has, unfortunately, blurred the general vision of present-day Muslims to such an extent, that the original Islam has turned for them into an alien religion. They proudly claim that Islam is a complete code of life and that their Prophet had set a perfect role model for all times to come, yet due to their own misdirected approach, they are unable to find any model for the position of modesty which is comparatively much more important than the model for a position of strength, as it is popularly called.

This state of affairs is entirely in accordance with the prophetic prediction: "Islam began as a stranger. And, finally, it will again become a stranger. Let, then, the strangers be blessed" (Muslim). It would be no exaggeration to say that the original version of Islam has literally become totally unfamiliar to both Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Islam, has thus, to be rediscovered. And to rediscover Islam, we have first of all to discover what the factors are that have made Islam a stranger in the world today. In the following



pages, the reader will find a thorough analysis of the historical and political reasons for the tragic phenomenon of the alienation of Islam as predicted in the *Hadith*.

## WHY ISLAM ALONE

We seldom hear the adherents of other religions complaining about their faiths being misunderstood. For instance Hindus, Buddhists and Christians do not hold that their respective religions are badly understood. One reason is that they do not mix their religions with communal politics, and do not generally try to advance their own worldly interests in the name of their religions—as present-day Muslims are doing on a large scale.

One who studies Islam, directly from its sacred scriptures, is astonished to find that the original Islam is totally different from what it is now generally held to be. Other religions are known to people as they are, hence the need to rediscover them does not arise. The problem of misapprehension applies therefore exclusively to Islam. There is a great need to study Islam from

its original scriptures in order to re-discover it in its original form. In modern times many books have been published with the aim of removing misunderstandings about Islam. One title is as follows: 'Islam, the Most Misunderstood Religion'.

But titles such as these are not in accordance with the actual state of affairs. These books start with the premise that non-Muslims have mistakenly come to regard Islam as a religion of intolerance and violence and then they attempt to remove these misapprehensions. But the actual question to be addressed is why there should ever have been such misunderstanding. It has to be conceded that it is based not on some allegation but rather on the fact that the Muslims of today, in almost every country, repeatedly display violence and intolerance towards others. They have adopted this course of action in the name of Islamic movements or Islamic *Jihad*. Were Muslims to do so in the name of their own communal interest and people attributed that to Islam, this would amount to misunderstanding based on an allegation. But when Muslims themselves



attributed their activities to Islam, it becomes a case of *proper understanding and not that of misunderstanding*.

Furthermore, the educated class of modern times is obsessed with the concept of anthropology, which treats religion as a social phenomenon instead of as a vehicle for revealed truth. Therefore, according to their way of thinking, they naturally come to regard the activities of Muslims to be Islam itself. And their thinking is further confirmed when they find that Muslims engage themselves in these activities in the very name of Islam.

Given this state of affairs, the real task to be performed is to differentiate between Islam as such and Muslims. It should be made clear that Islam and Muslims are not necessarily one and the same thing, so that one must differentiate between Islam and Muslims. Islam is an ideology. One who adopts this ideology in full is a Muslim, otherwise he is not a Muslim. It is essential that Muslims be judged in the light of Islamic ideals: Islam should not be judged in the light of what Muslims do in the name of Islam.

## PROPHETIC PERSPECTIVE

In a *hadith* the Prophet Muhammad, may peace be upon him, observed: My generation is the best one, then the second generation and then the third generation. (*Sahih Muslim*, 8/550)

This means that Islamic virtue was at its peak in the first generation, and that there was a decline in righteousness through the second and the third generations. This stage is known in the history of Islam as the period of the Prophet's companions and the period of Prophet's companions' companions.

There is nothing mysterious about it. Degeneration, a law of nature which applies to every group, set in after the first generation itself. By the third generation, the roots of Islam had weakened and by the fourth generation the characteristics of the first generation had been considerably diluted. This process went on until after a few centuries that period commenced when, we do find individuals in considerable number who had imbibed the true spirit of



Islam, but society on the whole was found drastically lacking in the features of the early Islam.

This is what is meant by Islam becoming “a stranger,” as in the above-quoted prediction of the Prophet. In latter times this difference has become so marked that the Islam of the early days has come to appear strange to the Muslims of today. Some basic reasons for this transformation are outlined below:

## **SEPARATION OF SPIRIT AND FORM**

The first reason for this difference lies in the separation of the spirit from the form. In later generations the form remains intact but the spirit is lost, rather like a fruit with its skin intact but altogether devoid of pulp.

For instance, in the first phase *iman* (faith) meant realization of God, while in later times *iman* becomes synonymous with the recitation of the creed of Islam (*kalimah*). In the early phase *ibadah* (worship) meant *khushu*, (spiritual devotion) but in later times it becomes synonymous with a set of

rituals. In earlier times *Akhlaq* (good moral character) meant unconditional good character, but in later times it becomes synonymous with the kind of character, whose goodness or badness depends upon the good or bad conduct of others.

If, in the early period of Islam, a position of trust was identified with responsibility, in the later period it becomes associated with honour and prestige. In the early phase, the ideology of Islam was highlighted, while in the later phase the history of Islam replaced the ideology. In the first phase, Islam was an issue of duty; in the second phase, it became an issue of pride. In the first phase, the Quran was a book of *tadabbur*, (deep contemplation), whereas in the second phase, it became simply a book for recitation. In the first phase, following in the footsteps of the Prophet was given the utmost importance but in later times, the Prophet was glorified as a national hero, so that Muslims might assert their own superiority over other nations. While the thinking of the first generation was that they could earn paradise only on the basis of their personal deeds, the people of the later period came to hold that

mere association with the *Ummah* (community) was enough to secure them paradise. People of the first generation turned to the original texts as preserved in the Qur'an and Sunnah to seek guidance in every matter; while people of the later generation referred to the commentaries and interpretations produced afterwards. In the first phase self-reckoning and criticism were appreciated, but in later times criticism became a taboo as Muslims became reluctant to accept their own faults, considering themselves above any shortcoming.

Due to these differences, the religion of the first phase of Islam became an unknown religion for the people of the later phase. Indeed, when they were called to the religion of the first phase, they found it so unfamiliar to their thinking and practices that they became dire opponents of such a call. However, there is no doubt that one who loses his popularity among the people as a result of calling them to the original Islam will have a great reward reserved for him by God in the Hereafter.

## COMMUNALIZATION OF THE RELIGION

Another reason for public alienation from the real Islam is that the faithfulls fall from the high pedestal of principled religion to the level of communal religion. Then, this communal agenda is Islamized, the ideals of Islam being replaced by communal aspirations. This is the result, in modern times, of Muslims being faced with many kinds of communal problems, such as the usurpation of their land, deprivation of political power, cultural invasion, exploitation in terms of economic resources, etc. And there are many other similar communal problems from which present day Muslims are suffering at the hands of their opponents.

All over the world, Muslims have launched movements on these scores. In some places they take the form of protest and demands, while in others they develop into armed conflicts. If such activities have any justification, it is purely communal. Muslims fight for their communal objectives, but they call it Islamic *jihad*. Their leaders form political parties, they enter into violent conflict

with other rulers in order to gain power, but they carry out all these activities in the name of Islam. Power play, pure and simple, is given the name of Islamic politics. The so-called Islamic *jihad* is the most glaring example of engaging in non-Islamic activities under the banner of Islam. In different parts of the world, wherever Muslims are engaged in fighting for their own communal purposes they inevitably call their activities Islamic *jihad*. The harm done by such violent *jihad* has multiplied thousand fold due to the modern media's selective coverage of news. Since hot news is more profitable than soft news, examples of Muslim *jihad* are seized upon by the media as grist to the mill. This has distorted the image of Islam to such an extent that, today, Islam and violence have become synonymous.

A state of affairs has developed in which Muslims have come to believe that the cause of Islam can be served only through *jihad* activism, that is, armed struggle. With this mindset, they are unable to understand the significance of peaceful struggle. Anyone who talks in terms of peace and tolerance finds his integrity in question. Any attempt at



making them understand the importance of peaceful struggle is seen as a conspiracy to keep them from performing *jihad* as a “religious duty.” It is thus an extremely difficult task to call Muslims to peaceful Islam. Such a mission involves the risk of being discredited among one’s own co-religionists. In consequence, the call, goes unheeded.

## THE VEIL OF INTERPRETATION

One reason for original Islam becoming alien is that as time went by self-styled interpretations of the Qur'an and Sunnat gradually placed a veil over the original content of these texts. A time came when the original Islam was completely obscured from view. The wrong, man-made interpretations took the place of revealed guidance. In later times, people mistakenly took them to be the real Islam.

In the early phase of Islam people derived their religion directly from the Qur'an and Sunnah, therefore, their association with the original Islam remained intact. But the interpretations and explanations of later days served only to obscure the original teachings. The natural beauty of Islam



disappeared. The Qur'an and Sunnah now turned into relics instead of being instruments of guidance. Thus the religion came to be based on latter-day interpretations and explanations instead of on the original scriptures.

How did this corruption set in in the literature produced by the later generations? The answer is that certain people, having a command over the language, were able to acquire a superficial knowledge of the scriptures but were unable to understand them in depth; for this realization (*ma'arifa*) is required. When one finds religion at the level of realization, one is endowed by God with the wisdom (*hikmat*) to be able to understand the deeper meaning of the words of the scriptures. On the other hand those who are not blessed with this special gift of wisdom, have nothing by which to understand Islam, except their own preconceptions.

They begin to interpret religion according to their own mindset. The result is that, although they refer to the Qur'an and *Sunnah*, their interpretations have little bearing on the original texts. Religious degeneration ensues in which they appear to follow

Islam but actually stray far from its spirit. They fail to differentiate between God-sent religion and man-made interpretation. At this point, one who calls people to the original Islam becomes an alien among his own people. He fails to gain popularity even among those already in the Muslim fold. However, losing popularity in this world for the sake of God will earn him a greater reward in the life Hereafter. For, when the image of Islam had been distorted, it was he, who was ready to take all the risks involved in the process of reviving its original form.

One great loss created by these additions to the original Islam was the shift in emphasis. Some important teachings of Islam were relegated to the background—for instance, concern for the larger humanity, *da'wah*, patience, etc. *Da'wah* is the greatest mission of the Muslim *Ummah*, for, although prophethood came to an end with Muhammad, may peace be upon him, the mission of the Prophet has not yet come to an end. The mission continues through the *Ummah*, as a matter of religious duty. It would be no exaggeration to say that without the performance of this duty, its very

credibility of being the Muslim *Ummah* would become doubtful. Strangely, indeed, *da'wah* found no place in the literature of the centuries after the Prophet. Neither has it been mentioned anywhere in the Muslim agenda of today. The classical commentaries of the Qur'an (*Tafsir*) also fail to give any prominence to *da'wah* as a concept. In books of *hadith* too, we find chapters on all subjects except *da'wah*. The same is true of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) in whose texts we do not find a chapter on *da'wah*.

According to the Qur'an, the exercise of patience (*sabr*) is a deed which makes man eligible for the highest reward (8:46); the patient man will be rewarded "beyond measure" (39:10). But the interpretation that gained popularity in later times was that the injunction of *sabr*, patience, had been abrogated and replaced by *jihad* (in the sense of *qital*, fighting). Thus, one who studies these books, gathers the impression, that consciously or unconsciously, patience might have been important in the past, but that nowadays it has lost its relevance. Now *jihad* (in the sense of *qital*) and not *sabr* is of the foremost importance.



It follows that whenever a reformer calls Muslims back to their duties concerning *da'wah* and *sabr*, they become antagonistic to such a call, because they have become conditioned to finding it alien to their thinking.

## THE OBSESSION WITH HISTORICAL GLORY

As mentioned above, one of the major reasons for the original Islam becoming an alien religion among the Muslims is that for latter day generations the basis for the Islamic ethos became the later history of Islam instead of the Qur'an and Sunnah. Muslims found their glorious history far more attractive than the Qur'an and Sunnat. For them they were just sets of words. Their history, on the contrary, gave them an immense sense of pride, as it was full of imperial grandeur and conquests. Although they continued to pay lip service to the Qur'an by reciting it, they were, in fact, lost in the glories of Islamic history. Gradually they came to associate themselves and Islam with this grand history: instead of the Qur'an and Sunnah, history became their chief source of inspiration.

This change of the source of inspiration wrought immense harm. When the Qur'an and Sunnah are one's intellectual sources it is modesty that is bred in the mind, whereas if one takes history as one's intellectual source, pride is bound to be generated.

If the Qur'an and Sunnah are taken to be the true sources of knowledge of God's will, all mankind, in the words of a *hadith*, will be regarded by the believers as God's family; the whole of humanity will become their concern: whereas, when the mind is shaped by history, Muslims see themselves as rulers, and others as subjects. If they derive Islam from the Qur'an and Sunnah, then all God's creation—even a blade of grass—will appear to them as God's signs. Whereas when history is the source of their Islam, the forts and palaces of their kings become signs of grandeur and glory to them. This is exactly what has happened with the latter day Muslims. Almost all the activities of Muslims in present times bear testimony to this fact. The speeches of their leaders, the books of their writers, the poetry of their poets, seem to centre on their glorious history. Their writers and speakers provide them food for thought about historical glory rather

than divine glory. This is the reason why in modern times a large number of books have been written by the Muslims bent on the celebration of history, while perhaps not a single book has been produced on the majesty of God Almighty.

Given this state of affairs, when a reformer arises to call Muslims to the religion of the Qur'an and Sunnah, his voice naturally appears strange to his hearers. For they feel that this person is calling them to a position of modesty, whereas their religion (that is, history) aims at placing them in a position of strength. In such an atmosphere, the words of the reformer will impinge as worthless, alien and unacceptable.